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BOOK III

FINAL REPORT

OF THE

SELECT COMMITTEE
TO STUDY GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

WITH RESPECT TO

INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

UNITED STATES SENATE

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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., CASE STUDY

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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., CASE STUDY

I. INTRODUCTION

From December 1963 until his death in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was the target of an intensive campaign by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to "neutralize" him as an effective civil rights leader. In the words of the man in charge of the FBI's "war" against Dr. King:

> No holds were barred. We have used [similar] techniques against Soviet agents. [The same methods were] brought home against any organization against which we were targeted. We did not differentiate. This is a rough, tough business.[1]

The FBI collected information about Dr. King's plans and activities through an extensive surveillance program, employing nearly every intelligence-gathering technique at the Bureau's disposal. Wiretaps, which were initially approved by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, were maintained on Dr. King's home telephone from October 1963 until mid-1965; the SCLC headquarter's telephones were covered by wiretaps for an even longer period. Phones in the homes and offices of some of Dr. King's close advisers were also wiretapped. The FBI has acknowledged 16 occasions on which microphones were hidden in Dr. King's hotel and motel rooms in an "attempt" to obtain information about the "private activities of King and his advisers" for use to "completely discredit" them.[2]

FBI informants in the civil rights movement and reports from field offices kept the Bureau's headquarters informed of developments in the civil rights field. The FBI's presence was so intrusive that one major figure in the civil rights movement testified that his colleagues referred to themselves as members of "the FBI's golden record club."[3]

The FBI's formal program to discredit Dr. King with Government officials began with the distribution of a "monograph" which the FBI realized could "be regarded as a personal attack on Martin Luther King,"[4] and which was subsequently described by a Justice Department official as "a personal diatribe . . . a personal attack without evidentiary support."[5]

Congressional leaders were warned "off the record" about alleged dangers posed by Reverend King. The FBI responded to Dr. King's receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize by attempting to undermine his reception by foreign heads of state and American ambassadors in the countries that he planned to visit. When Dr. King returned to the

[1] William Sullivan testimony, 11/1/75, p. 97.
[2] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 1/28/64.
[3] Andrew Young testimony, 2/19/76, p. 55.
[4] Memorandum from Alan Belmont to Clyde Tolson, 10/17/63.
[5] Burke Marshall testimony, 3/3/76, p. 32.

III. CONCERN INCREASES IN THE FBI AND THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION OVER ALLEGATIONS OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, AND THE FBI INTENSIFIES THE INVESTIGATION: JANUARY 1962–OCTOBER 1963

Introduction and Summary

This chapter explores developments in the Martin Luther King case from the period preceding the FBI's opening of the COMINFIL investigation in October 1962 through the FBI's decision to intensify its investigation of suspected communist influence in the civil rights movement in October 1963. Particular emphasis is placed on the internal reasons for the FBI's intensification of its investigation of Dr. King and on the interplay between the Justice Department and the FBI during this period.

In summary, the evidence described in this chapter establishes that the FBI barraged the Justice Department with a stream of memoranda concerning the Communist Party's interest in the civil rights movement and Dr. King's association with two individuals, referred to in this report as Advisers A and B, who were alleged to have strong ties to the Party.[60] In response to the Bureau's warnings, the Justice Department endeavored to convince Dr. King to sever his relations with those individuals, but met with only mixed success. Dr. King continued to turn to Adviser A for advice; Adviser B, whose association with Dr. King and allegedly with the Communist Party had been picked up by the press in late 1962, publicly announced his resignation from the SCLC in early July 1963, although he apparently continued to associate with Dr. King on an informal basis.

During hearings over the administration's proposed public accommodations bill in July 1963, critics of the bill charged that the civil rights movement, and Dr. King in particular, were influenced by Communists. Dr. King's plans for a civil rights march on Washington in August were receiving increasing publicity. On July 16, the Attorney General raised with the FBI's Justice Department liaison, Courtney Evans, the possibility of a wiretap on Dr. King and one of his legal advisers.

The following day the FBI sent an analysis of its COMINFIL information to the Justice Department. The administration decided to continue its public support of Dr. King. During the ensuing week, the President informed the press that there was no evidence that civil rights demonstrations were Communist-inspired; the Attorney General announced that the FBI had no evidence that any civil rights leaders were controlled by Communists; and the Attorney General rejected the FBI's request for authority to wiretap Dr. King.

In August 1963, the Justice Department received a report from the FBI which apparently contained allegations extremely unfavorable to Dr. King. The Attorney General told Courtney Evans that he faced impeachment if the report was "leaked," and demanded that it be resubmitted with a cover memorandum detailing the factual basis for the allegation. The memorandum submitted in response to that request contained no information concerning Dr. King that had not already been known to the Attorney General in July, but the Attorney General permitted the investigation to proceed.

[60] The memoranda also contained information about the civil rights movement of considerable political value to the administration.

In late July 1963, the FBI opened a file entitled "Communist Influence in Racial Matters," and closely monitored preparations for the August 28 Civil Rights March on Washington. The FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division informed Director Hoover shortly before the March that Communist influence in the civil rights movement was negligible. The Director disagreed. The head of the Domestic Intelligence Division, William Sullivan, responded by recommending more intense FBI surveillance of the civil rights movement.

A. The Justice Department Warns Dr. King About Advisers A and B: January 1962–June 1963

The Kennedy administration's concern over FBI allegations that Communists were influencing the civil rights movement led the Justice Department to make several attempts to persuade Dr. King to sever his relations with Advisers A and B. In January 1962, Hoover first warned Attorney General Kennedy that Advisor A, a member of the Communist Party, U.S.A., "is allegedly a close adviser to the Reverend Martin Luther King." [62] Shortly afterwards, Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division told Dr. King that the Bureau claimed Adviser A was a communist and advised that they break off relations.[63] According to an FBI memorandum, Deputy Attorney General Byron R. White also considered speaking with Dr. King about Adviser A, but decided against doing so when told by the FBI that revealing too much of the FBI's information might tip off Dr. King or Adviser A to the identity of certain FBI informants.[64]

Dr. King gave no indication of breaking off relations with Adviser A, who was a close friend and trusted advisor. He did, however, apparently consider the adverse effects on the civil rights movement that his association with Adviser B might cause.[65] In June 1962 the FBI intercepted a conversation [66] in which Adviser A recommended that Dr. King informally use Adviser B as his executive assistant, noting that "as long as Adviser B did not have the title of Executive Director, there would not be as much lightning flashing around him." Dr. King was reported to have agreed, remarking that "no matter what a man was, if he could stand up now and say he is not connected, then as far as I am concerned, he is eligible to work for me." [67]

On October 8, 1962, the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division prepared a memorandum summarizing accounts that had previously appeared in newspapers concerning Adviser B's alleged Communist background and his association with Dr. King. The Division forwarded the memorandum to Cartha D. DeLoach, head of the Crime Records Division, the FBI's public relations arm, for "possible use by his contacts in the news media field in such Southern states as Alabama where Dr. King has announced that the next targets for

[62] Memorandum from Director, FBI to Attorney General 1/8/62.
[63] Burke Marshall testimony, 3/31/76, p. 10.
[64] Memorandum from Courtney Evans to Alan Belmont, 2/6/62.
[65] Allegations concerning Adviser B's membership in the Communist Party had received wide publicity in the newspapers. There were no such press allegations about Adviser A.
[66] Adviser A's phones were covered by FBI wiretaps. See p. 88.
[67] Memorandum from New York Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 8/21/62, p. 6.

integration of universities are located." DeLoach's signature and the notation, "handled, Augusta (illegible), Atlanta, 1–/19" appear on the recommendation.[68]

The article was apparently disseminated, because an October 25, 1962, article in the Augusta Chronicle described Adviser B as a member of the CPUSA's National Committee who was serving as Dr. King's "Acting Executive Director." Dr. King publicly responded, on October 30, that "no person of known Communist affiliation" could serve on the staff of the SCLC and denied any knowledge that Adviser B had Communist affiliations. Dr. King also announced Adviser B's temporary resignation from the SCLC, pending an SCLC investigation of the allegations.

A stream of memoranda from the FBI, however, warned the Justice Department that Adviser B continued as an associate of Dr. King despite his apparent resignation from the SCLC. In December, Director Hoover was cautioning the Attorney General that Adviser B continued to "represent himself as being affiliated with the New York Office of the SCLC and, during late November and early December 1962, was actively engaged in the work of this organization."[69] A few days later, the Attorney General was informed that Advisers A and B were planning a "closeted . . . critical review" with Dr. King concerning the direction of the civil rights movement. Kennedy penned on the memorandum: "Burke—this is not getting any better."[70]

In early February 1963, Dr. King asked the Justice Department for a briefing on Adviser B's background, apparently in response to newspaper articles about Adviser B resulting from the Bureau's campaign to publicize Adviser B's relationship with Dr. King. Assistant Attorney General Marshall noted in a memorandum that he had "been in touch with the Attorney General on this matter and is anxious to have it handled as soon as possible."[71] Sometime later in February, Marshall spoke with Dr. King about severing his association with Advisers A and B. Memoranda from Director Hoover to the Justice Department during the ensuing months, however, emphasized that Dr. King was maintaining a close relationship with both men. Those memoranda to the Justice Department contained no new information substantiating the charges that either was a member of the Communist Party, or that either was carrying out the Party's policies.[72]

[68] Memorandum from F. J. Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 10/8/62, p. 2. The memorandum bears the caption "Communist Party, USA, COINTELPRO." This is the first indication of a counterintelligence program directed against Adviser B. Adviser A became the subject of such a program in 1966. For a discussion of the FBI's COINTELPRO effort, see staff report on COINTELPRO.

[69] Memorandum from Director, FBI to Attorney General, 1/28/63, p. 1.

[70] Memorandum from Director, FBI to Attorney General, 1/10/63. The Attorney General was subsequently told that Adviser B, Dr. King, and Adviser A conferred with other members of the SCLC on January 10 and 11. (Memorandum from Director, FBI to Burke Marshall, 1/31/63.)

[71] Memorandum from Alex Rosen to Alan Belmont, 2/4/63.

[72] On March 10 the Attorney General was informed that Adviser A and Dr. King had engaged in a lengthy conversation concerning an article that Dr. King was preparing for *The Nation*. (Memorandum from Director, FBI to Attorney General, 3/12/63.) On June 3, the Director sent the Attorney General a nine-page "concise summary" of information about Adviser A, emphasizing his role as Dr. King's adviser. (Memorandum from Director, FBI to Attorney General, 6/3/63.) An FBI memorandum in early June reported a discussion between

The Attorney General's concern over Dr. King's association with the two advisers continued. A memorandum by Hoover states that on June 17, 1963:

> The Attorney General called and advised he would like to have Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall talk to Martin Luther King and tell Dr. King he has to get rid of [Advisers A and B], that he should not have any contact with them directly or indirectly.
>
> I pointed out that if Dr. King continues this association, he is going to hurt his own cause as there are more and more Communists trying to take advantage of [the] movement and bigots down South who are against integration are beginning to charge Dr. King is tied in with Communists. I stated I thought Marshall could very definitely say this association is rather widely known and, with things crystalizing for them now, nothing could be worse than for Dr. King to be associated with it.[73]

Marshall subsequently spoke with Dr. King about Advisers A and B.[74] In a follow-up memorandum written several months later Marshall stated:

> . . . I brought the matter to the attention of Dr. King very explicitly in my office on the morning of June 22 prior to a scheduled meeting which Dr. King had with the President. This was done at the direction of the Attorney General, and the President separately [and] strongly urged Dr. King that there should be no further connection between Adviser B and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Dr. King stated that the connection would be ended.[75]

Dr. King later told one of his associates that the President had told him "there was an attempt (by the FBI) to smear the movement on the basis of Communist influence. The President also said, 'I assume you know you're under very close surveillance.' "[76]

Adviser A and Dr. King concerning whether Dr. King would appear on a television program in connection with a projected article in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Dr. King accepted Adviser A's recommendation that he read the article before committing himself because the reporter "raised a lot of questions about [Adviser B] and that kind of thing." (Memorandum from Director, FBI to Attorney General, 6/7/63.)

[73] Memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover to Clyde Tolson, Alan Belmont, Cartha DeLoach, Alex Rosen, William Sullivan, 6/17/63. During this period the Attorney General requested a report from the Internal Security Division concerning Dr. King. The reply, dated June 28, cited Advisers A and B as the chief sources of alleged Communist influence on Dr. King. (Memorandum from J. Walter Yeagley to the Attorney General, 6/28/63.)

[74] Andrew Young, who was present at the meeting with Burke Marshall, testified that Marshall had said that the Bureau had informed the Justice Department that there was in fact Communist influence in the civil rights movement, and had explicitly mentioned Adviser A. When Young asked Marshall for proof, he said that he had none, and that he "couldn't get anything out of the Bureau." Young recalled that Marshall had said, "We ask (the Bureau) for things and we get these big memos, but they don't ever really say anything." Young testified that Marshall "was asking us to disassociate ourselves from [Adviser A] altogether." (Andrew Young testimony, 2/19/76, pp. 40–44)

[75] Memorandum from Burke Marshall to J. Edgar Hoover, 9/12/63.

[76] Young, 2/19/76, p. 40.

the Government had instituted this coverage. These were the very thoughts that the Attorney General expressed today in withdrawing his request.

With reference to the other technical surveillance requested at the same time, namely, the one on [the New York attorney], the Attorney General felt this was in a different category and we should go forward with this coverage. It is noted that this was previously approved in writing by the Attorney General.

. . . We will take no further action to effect technical coverage on Martin Luther King, either at his home or at his office at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, in the absence of a further request from the Attorney General.[95]

In June 1969, Director Hoover told a reporter for the Washington Evening Star that Attorney General Kennedy had "requested that the telephones of Dr. King be covered by electronic devices and was persuaded by our people not to do it in view of the possible repercussions," and because Dr. King's constant traveling made a wiretap impractical.[96] When the Committee asked Courtney Evans whether the idea of installing a wiretap originated with the Attorney General, he testified:

> No, this is not clear in my mind at all. The record that has been exhibited to me really doesn't establish this definitely, although that inference can be drawn from some of the memoranda. But it is my recollection, without the benefit of any specifics, that there was much more to it than this. And I have the feeling that there were pressures existing in time to develop more specific information that may have had a bearing here.
>
> Q. Pressures emanating from where and upon whom?
>
> A. I think from both sides, the Bureau wanted to get more specific information, and the Department wanted resolved the rather indefinite information that had been received indicating the possibility of Communist influence on the Dr. King movement.[97]

D. The Attorney General Voices Concern Over Continuing FBI Reports About King: July–August 1963

Following the appearance of an article on July 25, 1963, in the *Atlanta Constitution*, titled "One-time Communist Organizer Heads Rev. King's Office in N.Y.," Dr. King announced that an SCLC investigation of Adviser B indicated that he had "no present connection with the CP nor any sympathy with its philosophy." Dr. King explained that Adviser B had been on the SCLC staff on a temporary basis since his resignation in December 1962, but that he had left the SCLC on June 26, 1963, by "mutual agreement" because of concern

[95] Memorandum from Courtney Evans to Alan Belmont, 7/25/63.
[96] Jeremiah O'Leary, *The Evening Star*, 6/19/69; Hoover memorandum for record, 6/19/69.
[97] Courtney Evans testimony, 12/1/75, pp. 7–8.

that his affiliation with the integration movement would be used against it by "segregationists and race baiters."

The Justice Department, however, continued to receive reports from the FBI that Dr. King was continuing his association with Advisers A and B.[99] Shortly after Attorney General Kennedy's July 23 response to the Commerce Committee, Courtney Evans:

> Advisor B, [deleted].
> pointed out to Marshall the undesirability of making the specific comments . . . as to giving complete clearance to Martin Luther King as Marshall had had the full details as to King's association with [Adviser A] and [Adviser B.]
>
> Marshall said that he was most appreciative of our warning him about these pitfalls and he would be guided accordingly in any future statements. He added that he would also appreciate our continuing to highlight for him any information concerning communist activity in the Negro movement." [100]

On July 29, Director Hoover sent the Justice Department a report from the New York Office entitled "Martin Luther King, Jr.: Affiliation with the Communist Movement." [101] The entry under the caption, "Evidence of Communist Party Sympathies," has been deleted by the FBI from copies of the report given to the Committee on the grounds that it might compromise informants. It was a general characterization and ran for only one and one-half lines. A memorandum from Courtney Evans described Attorney General Kennedy's reaction:

> The Attorney General stated that if this report got up to the Hill at this time, he would be impeached. He noted if this report got out, it would be alleged the FBI said King was [excised by the FBI].
>
> The Attorney General went on to say that the report had been reviewed in detail by Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall who had told him there wasn't anything new here concerning King's alleged communist sympathies but that it was the timing of the report and its possible misuse that concerned him. The Attorney General went on to say that he didn't feel he could fully trust everyone in the Internal Security Division of the Department.
>
> I pointed out to the Attorney General that first of all this report was classified secret and was just a summary report to bring our files and that of the Department's up to date. He said that while this was undoubtedly true, the submission of the report at this time in this form presented definite hazards. He therefore asked that the report be resubmitted to him with a cover memorandum setting forth the exact evidence avail-

[99] On July 17, in the midst of publicity concerning Dr. King's association with Adviser B, Director Hoover informed the Attorney General that although Adviser B had formally resigned from the SCLC, he was continuing his association with Dr. King. (Memorandum from Director, FBI, to Attorney General, 7/17/63.)
[100] Memorandum from Courtney Evans to Alan Belmont, 7/29/63.
[101] Report of Special Agent: *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Affiliation with the Communist Movement*, 7/22/63.

istration. Less than a month later the Director informed the Atlanta office that an SCLC wiretap "is in line to be presented to the new Attorney General, and a survey, with full security assured . . . is desirable." [163] FBI files contain no indication of the disposition of this final request.

C. MICROPHONE SURVEILLANCE OF DR. KING: JANUARY 1964–NOVEMBER 1965.

From January 1964 through November 1965, the FBI installed at least 15 hidden microphones in hotel and motel rooms occupied by Martin Luther King. [164] The FBI has told the Committee about the following microphone surveillances:

—Willard Hotel, Washington, D.C. (Jan. 5, 1964).
—Shroeder Hotel, Milwaukee (Jan. 27, 1964).
—Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu (Feb. 18, 1964).
—Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles (Feb. 20, 1964).
—Hyatt House Motel, Los Angeles (Feb. 22, 1964).
—Statler Hotel, Detroit (Mar. 19, 1964).
—Senator Motel, Sacramento (Apr. 23, 1964).
—Hyatt House Motel, Los Angeles (July 7, 1964).
—Manger Hotel, Savannah, Ga. (Sept. 28, 1964).
—Park Sheraton Hotel, New York (Jan. 8, 1965).
—Americana Hotel, New York (Jan. 28, 1965).
—Sheraton Atlantic Hotel, New York (May 12, 1965).
—Astor Hotel, New York (Oct. 14, 1965).
—New York Hilton Hotel, New York (Oct. 28, 1965).
—Americana Hotel, New York (Nov. 29, 1965). [165]

1. Reasons for the FBI's Microphone Surveillance of Dr. King.

The wiretaps on Dr. King's home telephone and the phones of the SCLC offices were authorized by the Attorney General for the stated purpose of determining whether suspected communists were influencing the course of the civil rights movement. FBI documents indicate that the microphone coverage, (which was initiated without the knowledge of the Attorney Generals, in conformance with practice then current), was originally designed not only to pick up information bearing on possible Communist influence over Dr. King, but also to obtain information for use in the FBI's secret effort to discredit Dr. King as the leader of the civil rights movement. [166] By 1965, references to discrediting efforts had been dropped, and documents requesting authorization for microphones mentioned only the purpose of obtaining information about possible communist influences. [167] The details of the Bureau's efforts to undermine Dr. King are discussed in the ensuing chapters.

The first microphones were installed about two weeks after a December 23, 1963, FBI conference at which methods of "neutralizing" Dr. King were explored. [168] Microphone surveillance was again discussed at an all-day conference at FBI Headquarters in February 1964, attended by representatives of the FBI laboratory "preparatory to effecting coverage of the activities of Martin Luther King, Jr., and his associates in Honolulu." [169] Justifying the need for microphone coverage, the Chief of the FBI's Internal Security Section wrote that the FBI was "attempting" to obtain information about "the [private] activities of Dr. King and his associates" so that Dr. King could be "completely discredited." [170]

The FBI memorandum authorizing the placement of the first microphone on Dr. King—at the Willard Hotel in early January 1964—gave as a basis "the intelligence and counterintelligence possibilities which thorough coverage of Dr. King's activities might develop. . . ." [171] The Willard Hotel "bug" yielded 19 reels of tape. A memorandum summarizing the tapes was sent to the Director with William Sullivan's recommendation that it be shown to Walter Jenkins, President Johnson's Special Assistant, "inasmuch as Dr. King is seeking an appointment with President Johnson." [172] Cartha D. DeLoach, Assistant to the Director, showed the summary memorandum to Jenkins, and later wrote:

> I told Jenkins that the Director indicated I should leave this attachment with him if he desired to let the President personally read it. Jenkins mentioned that he was sufficiently aware of the facts that he could verbally advise the President of the matter. Jenkins was of the opinion that the FBI could perform a good service to the country if this matter could somehow be confidentially given to members of the press. I

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[163] Memorandum from Director, FBI to SAC, Atlanta, 2/14/69.

[164] Witnesses have indicated that other microphones might have been used to cover the activities of Dr. King and his associates, although those microphones might have been placed by local law enforcement officers. Bureau documents indicate that the New York and Miami police did in fact place microphones in Dr. King's hotel rooms. (Memorandum from Director, FBI to Special Agent in Charge, New York, 5/7/65; Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 5/27/66). Congressman Andrew Young, who was one of Dr. King's chief aides, testified: "We found a bug in the pulpit in a church in Selma, Alabama, in 1965, and we didn't even move it or destroy it. We took it out from under the pulpit, taped it on top of the pulpit, and Reverend Abernathy called it, 'this little do-hickey' and he said, 'I want you to tell Mr. Hoover, I don't want it under here where there is a whole lot of static, I want him to get it straight,' and he preached to the little bug." (Andrew Young testimony, 2/19/76, p. 55.)

[165] Letter from FBI to Senate Select Committee, 7/24/75, pp. 4–5. (The Bureau also authorized the installation of a microphone at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York on March 29, 1965, but Dr. King did not stay at the hotel and the coverage was terminated.)

[166] See, for example, Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 1/6/64; memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 1/28/64. Some Bureau witnesses have suggested that the microphones were installed only to intercept conversations between Dr. King and other individuals, such as Adviser A, to determine the extent of communist influence over King. The Bureau, however, was unable to produce any evidence that it had anticipated meetings between Dr. King and Adviser A or between Dr. King and any other of his advisers whom the Bureau alleged had communist connections on the initial occasions when microphones were used.

[167] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 10/29/65; memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 11/29/65.

[168] Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 1/13/64. This conference and the FBI's attempts to discredit King are discussed *infra*, pp. 133 *et seq.*

[169] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 2/4/64.

[170] Baumgardner memorandum, 1/28/64.

[171] Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 1/6/64.

[172] Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 1/13/64. The memorandum did not indicate how the information had been obtained.

told him the Director had this in mind, however, he also believed we should obtain additional information prior to discussing it with certain friends.[173]

The FBI was apparently encouraged by the intelligence afforded by "bugs" and by the White House's receptiveness to that type of information. A microphone was installed at the Shroeder Hotel in Milwaukee two weeks later, but was declared "unproductive" because "there were no activities of interest developed." [174] Dr. King's visit to Honolulu in mid-February 1964 was covered by a squad of surveillance experts brought in for the occasion from San Francisco. One of these experts was described in a Bureau memorandum as the "most experienced, most ingenious, most unruffled, most competent sound man for this type of operation in the San Francisco Office;" another was chosen because he had "shown unusual ingenuity, persistence, and determination in making microphone installations;" and a third had "been absolutely fearless in these types of operations for over twelve years." [175] More than twenty reels of tape were obtained during Dr. King's stay in Honolulu and his sojourn in Los Angeles immediately afterward.[176] Director Hoover agreed to send a copy of a memorandum describing the contents of the tapes to Jenkins and Attorney General Kennedy in order to:

> remove all doubt from the Attorney General's mind as to the type of person King is. It will probably also eliminate King from any participation in [a memorial for President Kennedy which the Attorney General was helping to arrange].[177]

Dr. King's stay in Los Angeles in July 1964 was covered by both wiretaps and microphones in his hotel room. The wiretap was intended to gain intelligence about Dr. King's plans at the Republican National Convention. Microphone surveillance was requested to attempt to obtain information useful in the campaigns to discredit him.[178] Sullivan's memorandum describing the coverage was sent to Hoover with a recommendation against dissemination to the White House or the Attorney General:

> as in this instance it is merely repetitious and does not have nearly the impact as prior such memoranda. We are continuing to follow closely King's activities and giving consideration to every possibility for future similar coverage that will add to our record on King so that in the end he might be discredited and thus be removed from his position of great stature in the Negro community.[179]

[173] Memorandum from Cartha D. DeLoach to J. Edgar Hoover, 1/14/64. Jenkins told members of Committee staff in an informal interview that he had never suggested disseminating derogatory material about Dr. King to the press. (Staff summary of interview with Walter Jenkins, 12/1/75, p. 2.) The Committee did not take Jenkins testimony because Jenkins informed the Committee that he was ill.

[174] Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 1/28/64.

[175] Airtel, Special Agent in charge, San Francisco, to FBI Director, 2/25/64.

[176] The FBI also covered Dr. King's activities with photographic surveillance.

[177] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 3/4/64. The memorandum did not show how the information had been obtained.

[178] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 7/2/64.

[179] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 7/15/64.

Hoover wrote on the memorandum, "Send to Jenkins." The summary memorandum and a cover letter were sent to Jenkins on July 17.[180]

It should also be noted that Dr. King's activities at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey in August 1964 were closely monitored by the FBI. Microphones were not installed on that occasion, although wiretaps were placed on Dr. King's hotel room phone. The stated justification for the wiretap was the investigation of possible communist influence and the fact that Dr. King "may indulge in a hunger fast as a means of protest." [181] A great deal of potentially useful political information was obtained from this wiretap and disseminated to the White House.[182]

The memorandum authorizing microphone coverage of Dr. King's room in Savannah, Georgia during the annual SCLC conference in September and October 1964 described surveillance as necessary because it was "expected that attempts will again be made to exert influence upon the SCLC and in particular on King by communists." [183]

The seven "bugs" in Dr. King's rooms during visits to New York from January to November 1965 were justified in contemporaneous internal FBI memoranda by anticipated meetings of Dr. King with several people whom the FBI claimed had affiliations with the Communist Party.[184] No mention was made of the possibility of obtaining private life material in memoranda concerning these "bugs." [185]

2. Evidence Bearing on Whether the Attorneys General Authorized or Knew About the Microphone Surveillance of Dr. King

In summary, it is clear that the FBI never requested permission for installing microphones to cover Dr. King from Attorney General Kennedy, and there is no evidence that it ever directly informed him that it was using microphones. There is some question, however, concerning whether the Attorney General ultimately realized that the FBI was using "bugs" because of the nature of the information that he was being sent.

Evidence concerning Attorney General Katzenbach's knowledge of microphone surveillance of Dr. King is contradictory. In March 1965, Katzenbach required the FBI for the first time to seek the Justice Department's approval for all microphone installations. The FBI has given the Committee documents which indicate that Katzenbach was

[180] Letter from J. Edgar Hoover to Walter Jenkins, 7/17/64.

[181] Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 8/21/64.

[182] The FBI's surveillance of Dr. King and other civil rights leaders at the Atlantic City Democratic National Convention is discussed at length in a separate staff report dealing with electronic surveillance.

[183] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 9/28/64.

[184] Memoranda from Joseph Sizoo to William Sullivan, 1/8/65, 1/29/65, and 5/13/65; memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 10/14/65; memoranda from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 10/29/65 and 11/29/65.

[185] Possible reasons that the mention of the collection of private life material was dropped from FBI memoranda during this period include (1) the "truce" between Dr. King and the FBI after December 1964 (see, pp. 163 *et seq.*) and (2) the fact that after May 1965 the FBI was required to inform the Attorney General of microphone surveillance and did not want to leave a "paper record" referring to the FBI's program to discredit Dr. King.

that it be distributed to the Attorney General, the White House, CIA, State Department, Defense Department, and Defense Department intelligence agencies.[215] Sullivan testified that the purpose of the monograph was to "discredit King."[216]

Belmont submitted the monograph to the Director with a note stating:

> The attached analysis of Communism and the Negro movement is highly explosive. It can be regarded as a personal attack on Martin Luther King. There is no doubt it will have a heavy impact on the Attorney General and anyone else to whom we disseminate. . . .
>
> The memorandum makes good reading and is based on information from reliable sources. We may well be charged, however, with expressing opinions and conclusions, particularly with reference to some of the statements about King.
>
> This memorandum may startle the Attorney General, particularly in view of his past association with King, and the fact that we are disseminating this outside the Department. He may resent this. Nevertheless, the memorandum is a powerful warning against Communist influence in the Negro movement, and we will be carrying out our responsibility by disseminating it to the people indicated in the attached memorandum.[217]

The monograph was distributed on October 18, 1963. One week later, the Attorney General called Courtney Evans and stated that he had just learned that the Army had received a copy of a report about Dr. King's alleged communist activities. Evans reported to Belmont:

> He was obviously irritated. He went on to ask if the Army got copies of all reports submitted to him. . . . The Attorney General asked what responsibilities the Army had in relation to the communist background of Martin Luther King. I told the Attorney General . . . that the Army had an interest in communist activities particularly in relation to racial matters because the military had to be called on if civil disturbances arising out of such matters went beyond the ability of civilian authorities. This explanation seemed to serve no purpose.[218]

Director Hoover recorded in a memorandum of the same date:

> The Attorney General called and advised me there was a lot of talk at the Pentagon regarding the document. . . . The Attorney General anticipated that this information would leak out as the military didn't like the Negroes.
>
> The Attorney General felt we should get back all copies of the document. I told him . . . we would get them from all agencies to which they were disseminated. . . . I also told him if any newspapers asked about this, no comment would be made and no mention would be made that such a document existed.[219]

All copies were recovered by October 28.

Burke Marshall, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Civil Rights Division under Robert Kennedy, told the Committee that the monograph was:

> a personal diatribe . . . a personal attack without evidentiary support on the character, the moral character and person of Dr. Martin Luther King, and it was only peripherally related to anything substantive, like whether or not there was communist infiltration or influence on the civil rights movement. . . . It was a personal attack on the man and went far afield from the charges [of possible communist influence].[220]

Marshall recalled that he had been very "irritated" about the monograph and that the Attorney General had "thought it was outrageous." He remembered that the Attorney General had ordered the monograph withdrawn, but did not know if the Attorney General had taken any further steps to reprimand the Bureau.[221]

B. The FBI Plans Its Campaign To Discredit Dr. King: December 23, 1963

On December 23, 1963, a nine-hour conference was held at FBI headquarters to discuss Martin Luther King. In attendance were Assistant Director Sullivan, Internal Security Section Chief Frederick Baumgardner, three other FBI headquarters officials, and two agents from the FBI's Atlanta Field Office.

A prepared list of twenty-one proposals was presented and discussed. The proposals raised the possibility of "using" ministers, "disgruntled" acquaintances, "aggressive" newsmen, "colored" agents, Dr. King's housekeeper, and even suggested using Dr. King's wife or "placing a good looking female plant in King's office."[222] An account of the meeting written by William Sullivan emphasized that the Bureau must take a "discreet approach" in developing information about Dr. King for use "at an opportune time in a counterintelli-

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[215] Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 10/15/63.

[216] William Sullivan testimony, 11/1/75, p. 49.

[217] Memorandum from Alan Belmont to Clyde Tolson, 10/17/63. Hoover wrote in the margin "We must do our duty" and "I am glad you recognize at last that there exists such influence." Copies were sent to the Attorney General, the White House, the Secretary of State, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of Naval Intelligence, the Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, and the Department of Special Investigations of the Air Force.

[218] Memorandum from Courtney Evans to Alan Belmont, 10/25/63.

[219] Memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover to Clyde Tolson, Alan Belmont, John Mohr, Cartha DeLoach, Alex Rosen, and William Sullivan, 10/25/63.

[220] Burke Marshall testimony, 3/3/76, p. 32. Carl T. Rowan, then Director of USIA, was sent a copy of the monograph. In a newspaper article in 1969, Rowan wrote, "(p)erhaps this is the time for me to reveal that I have read the FBI reports based on electronic surveillance of the late Nobel Prize-winner. I know how much dirt the FBI has dug up, and 90 percent of it is barn-yard gossip that has nothing to do with 'internal security' or 'Marxist influences.'" (Carl T. Rowan, "FBI Won't Talk About Additional Wiretappings," The Washington D.C. Evening Star, 6/20/69, p. A-13)

[221] Marshall testimony, 3/3/76, p. 34.

[222] FBI work paper, "Questions To Be Explored at Conference 12/23/63 re: Communist Influence in Racial Matters."

The Bureau subsequently considered the possibility of getting Detroit policemen to raid Dr. King's hotel room in March 1964 and kept abreast of the Miami police force's plans to raid Dr. King's hotel room in 1966 (Unsigned Bureau memorandum, "For Telephonic Briefing of Detroit Office;" Airtel, Miami Office to Director, FBI, 5/23/66).

Dr. King had to be held in confidence, and the board of trustees was governed by "liberals." [259]

4. Attempts to Discredit Dr. King with Churches

On June 12, 1964, William Sullivan wrote a memorandum stating that he had been contacted by the General Secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ. Sullivan reported that, "I took the liberty of advising [him] confidentally of the fact that Dr. Martin Luther King not only left a great deal to be desired from the standpoint of Communism, but also from the standpoint of personal conduct." Sullivan observed:

> I think that we have sowed an idea here which may do some good. I will follow up on the matter very discreetly to see what desirable results may emanate therefrom. [260]

Sullivan met again with the General Secretary in mid-December 1964 and reported that the General Secretary had assured him "steps have been taken by the National Council of the Churches of Christ to make certain from this time on that Martin Luther King will never get 'one single dollar' of financial support from the National Council." Sullivan reported that the Secretary stated that he had discussed Dr. King's background with some "key" protestant clergymen who were "horrified." Sullivan also noted that the Secretary said that he also intended to discuss the matter with Roy Wilkins to persuade Wilkins "that Negro leaders should completely isolate King and remove him from the role he is now occupying in civil rights activities." [261]

On December 8, 1964, the Director authorized the disclosure of information about Dr. King's personal life to an influential member of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), so that he could pass the information along to the General Secretary of BWA, and to BWA Program Committee members, to prevent the Committee from inviting Dr. King to address the BWA's 1965 Congress in Miami Beach. The Director rejected a proposal, however, for "arranging for [certain BWA members] to listen to sources we have concerning this matter." [262]

5. Attempts to Discredit Dr. King with the Pope

On August 31, 1964, the FBI learned that Dr. King, who was going to be touring Europe in September, might have plans to visit the Pope. Internal Security Section Chief Baumgardner observed:

> It would be shocking indeed for such an unscrupulous character as King to receive an audience with the Pope. It is believed that if a plan to see the Pope is in the making, it ought to be nipped in the bud. We have considered different possibilities for meeting this problem and believe that the best one would be to have Assistant Director Malone of the New York office personally contact Francis Cardinal Spellman and on a highly confidential basis bring to the Cardinal's attention the fact that King is to visit Rome. . . .

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The FBI's efforts were to no avail. The Pope met with Dr. King. The Director wrote across the memoranda informing him of that meeting, "astounding," [265] and "I am amazed that the Pope gave an audience to such a [excised by FBI]." [265] The Director then initiated inquiries into the reason for the failure of this project.

6. The Attempt to Discredit Dr. King During His Receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize

On October 14, 1964, Martin Luther King was named to win the Nobel Peace Prize. He received the prize in Europe on December 10, 1965. The FBI took measures to dampen Dr. King's welcome, both in Europe and on his return home.

On November 22, 1964—two weeks before Dr. King's trip to receive the prize—the Domestic Intelligence Division assembled a thirteen-page updated printed version of the monograph which Attorney General Kennedy had ordered recalled in October 1963. [266] A copy was sent to Bill Moyers, Special Assistant to the President, on December 1, 1964, with a letter requesting his advice concerning whether the monograph should also be distributed to "responsible officials in the Executive Branch." [267] Moyers gave his permission on December 7, [268] and copies were distributed to the heads of several executive agencies. [269]

Information about Dr. King's private life was also made available to United Nations representatives Adlai Stevenson and Ralph Bunche, who the Bureau had learned were being considered as possible par-

[263] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 8/31/64, p. 1.
The Chief of the Security Section recommended:
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[264] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 9/8/64.
[265] Director's notes on UPI release, 9/8/64, and *New York Herald Tribune*, 9/19/64.
[266] Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 11/22/64. See pp. 131 et seq.
[267] Letter from J. Edgar Hoover to Bill Moyers, 12/1/64.
[268] Memorandum from Cartha DeLoach to John Mohr, 12/7/64.
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ticipants at the December 1964 "welcome home" reception for Dr. King.[270]

Three days after Vice President-elect Humphrey participated in one of the "welcome home" receptions for Dr. King in New York, the Bureau sent him a copy of the updated King monograph and a separate memorandum entitled "Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Personal Conduct." [272] On December 8, 1964, the Bureau decided to brief Governor Nelson Rockefeller about Dr. King's private life and alleged Communist associations, apparently to dissuade the Governor from taking part in ceremonies commending Dr. King for having received the Nobel Prize.[273]

Upon learning that Dr. King might meet with a certain foreign leader, FBI headquarters instructed the FBI representative in that country to brief the proper authorities about Dr. King.[274] The United States ambassadors in London and Oslo were briefed about Dr. King because "the Ambassadors might consider entertaining King while he is in Europe to receive the Nobel Peace Prize" and it might be possible to "forestall such action by the Ambassadors if they were briefed." The ambassadors in Stockholm and Copenhagen were also briefed because "King is also to visit those cities." [275]

On November 10, 1964, the FBI learned that the United States Information Agency was considering requesting Dr. King to engage in a one-week lecture tour in Europe following his receipt of the Noble Prize. Hoover approved the Domestic Intelligence Division's recommendation that USIA be furnished with the latest critical Bureau reports about Dr. King.[276]

7. Attempts to Block Dr. King's Publications

On September 11, 1964, the FBI learned that Dr. King intended to publish an article in a major national publication. The Domestic Intelligence Division noted that it did not know "what line King will take in the article or what its specific stands will be," but, nonetheless recommended that "it would be well to prevent any publication of his views." [277]

The task of preventing publication was assigned to an agent with contacts at the magazine who had "forestalled" the publication of an article by Dr. King in that magazine earlier in 1964.[278]

The agent subsequently reported that he had contacted an official of the magazine in late September. According to the agent, the official had agreed to "endeavor to assist" the FBI, and had been briefed about King, but was unable to block publication because a contractual agreement had already been made.[279] The FBI did apparently have some influence at the magazine, however, because a memorandum reporting the incident concludes:

[270] Untitled memorandum, 11/12/64.
[272] Letter from J. Edgar Hoover to Hubert Humphrey, 12/21/64.
[273] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 12/8/64.
[274] Cable from Director, FBI to Legat, 11/10/64.
[275] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 11/30/64.
[276] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 11/12/64.
[277] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 9/11/64.
[278] Baumgardner memorandum, 9/11/64.
[279] Memorandum to Cartha DeLoach, 11/3/64.

> In connection with this [magazine] article by King, our sources have indicated that since he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize he has attempted through some of his associates to change the [magazine] article in an effort to soften criticism made by him against other civil rights groups and leaders. King feared that such criticism would cause difficulties in the civil rights movement. The [magazine], however, has resisted King's efforts to make these changes.[280]

In February 1964, the Director alerted the field offices that Dr. King was writing a new book, and noted that "it is entirely possible that with the publication of the book the Bureau may desire to take some action, possibly in the counterintelligence area or otherwise, which may be designed to discredit King or otherwise neutralize his effectiveness . . ." [281]

The field offices were instructed to maintain information relating to the preparation and publication of the book. The FBI files indicate that this information was collected, but it is not clear whether it was ever used.

8. Attempt to Undermine the National Science Foundation's Cooperation with the SCLC

The FBI sent the National Science Foundation (NSF) a copy of the second printed monograph on King in order to convince the NSF to remove the SCLC from "the NSF program to obtain qualified Negro students from southern schools." [282]

9. Unsuccessful FBI Attempts to Locate Financial Improprieties

In early January 1964, the Chief of the Internal Security Section of the Domestic Intelligence Division, Frederick J. Baumgardner, recommended that "examination of recent income tax returns of King might well reveal information which could assist the Bureau in its efforts to discredit King or neutralize his effectiveness." [283] The Intelligence Division subsequently acquired from the Internal Revenue Service copies of income tax returns for the prior five years of Dr. King, the SCLC, and the Gandhi Society,[284] an organization which the FBI stated "augmented" the fund-raising activities of the SCLC.[285] The Intelligence Division of the IRS told the Bureau that "IRS had very carefully scrutinized King's returns in the past but had not been able to establish a cause of action against him." [286] However, the IRS assured the FBI that Dr. King's current returns would

[280] FBI memorandum, 11/3/64, p. 21.
[281] Memorandum from Director, FBI, to Special Agent in Charge, New York, 2/18/64.
[282] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 12/17/64, p. 2.
[283] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 1/8/64. Baumgardner observed that it was "essential that our current requests of the IRS . . . be handled in a manner which would provide for optimum security so that neither King nor any other unauthorized individuals may become aware of the Bureau's interest and so that no embarrassment may come to the Bureau."
[284] A wiretap had been placed on the Ghandi Society in July, 1963.
[285] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 3/25/64.
[286] Memorandum from Daniel Brennan to William Sullivan, 3/27/64.

be scrutinized "very carefully to determine whether any violations appear." [287] None did.

Undeterred, the Director informed the field offices that "the Bureau believes that more than ever it would be most desirable to identify any bank where [King] may have an account . . . and consider an audit of such account." [288]

One effort to uncover derogatory information about Dr. King was conceived by the Supervisor in charge of the King case during a golf game.[289] A remote acquaintance of the Supervisor mentioned that he had heard from a friend that an acquaintance had said that Dr. King had a numbered account in a foreign bank with a balance of over one million dollars. The Supervisor suggested to Sullivan:

> If we can prove that King is hoarding large sums of money, we would have available possibly the best information to date which could be used to discredit him, especially in the eyes of his own people . . . . we may take the action to discredit King ourselves through friendly news sources, or the like, or we might turn the information over to the Internal Revenue Service for possible criminal prosecution.[290]

The plan was approved by Director Hoover and an inquiry was initiated. By December 1965, the investigation into a possible foreign bank account was described by the Director as "the most important presently pending" facet of the King investigation.[291] The investigation was dropped shortly afterward, however, when it developed that the initial source of the allegation informed the FBI that "it was merely a wild conclusion that had been previously drawn by someone whose identity he does not now recall." [292]

F. The Question of Whether Government Officials Outside of the FBI Were Aware of the FBI's Effort to Discredit Dr. King

There is no doubt that the responsible officials in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were aware of the FBI's COMINFIL investigation involving Dr. King and the SCLC and that the wiretaps used by the FBI to collect its information were authorized under procedures existing at the time. While there is some question concerning whether officials outside of the FBI were aware that the FBI was using microphones to cover Dr. King's activities, there is no doubt that the product of the microphone surveillance was widely disseminated within the executive branch. Indeed, dissemination of the printed "monograph" about Dr. King to several executive agencies was expressly approved by Bill Moyers, President Johnson's assistant, in January 1965.

[287] Brennan memorandum, 3/27/64. On the bottom of this memorandum, Hoover wrote "What a farce!"

[288] Memorandum from Director, FBI to Special Agent in Charge, New York. 5/21/64.

[289] It should be noted that the Supervisor in charge of the King case is still in a high position with the FBI and handled the committee's documents requests in the King case investigation.

[290] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 6/29/65.

[291] Memorandum from Director, FBI, to Special Agent in Charge, New Orleans. 12/3/65.

[292] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 12/10/65.

The Committee has been unable to determine the extent to which the FBI's effort to discredit Dr. King and the SCLC by disseminating unfavorable information outside of the Government was suspected or known about by Government officials responsible for supervising the FBI. The Committee requested the FBI to provide any information in its possession reflecting that any Presidents or Attorneys General during the relevant periods were aware of any FBI efforts to "discredit" or "neutralize" Dr. King. The Bureau replied:

> A review of the King file in response to other items included in the request and a polling of all Headquarters personnel involved in that and previous reviews did not result in the location or recollection of any information in FBIHQ files to indicate any of the aforementioned individuals were specifically aware of any efforts, steps or plans or proposals to "discredit" or "neutralize" King.
>
> It is, of course, evident that much information developed in the course of the King case involving him in activities of interest to the White House and to representatives of the Department of Justice, including Attorneys General Kennedy and Katzenbach, as well as Assistant Attorney General Marshall, was such that it could conceivably have been the opinion of one or more of the above individuals that such information was being provided to "discredit" or "neutralize" King.[293]

Nicholas Katzenbach, Burke Marshall, Walter Jenkins, and Bill Moyers have told the Committee that they did not realize that the FBI was engaged in a concerted effort to discredit Dr. King, and that to the best of their knowledge, Presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, as well as Attorney General Robert Kennedy, were not aware of that effort. There was no evidence that the FBI's program to discredit Dr. King was authorized outside of the FBI. There is evidence, however, that officials responsible for supervising the FBI received indications that such an effort to discredit Dr. King might be taking place, and failed to take adequate steps to prevent it. President Johnson and his Attorneys General were aware at least of Bureau attempts to disseminate unfavorable reports about Dr. King to the press. Top Executive Branch officials have told the Committee that they had believed that the FBI had tape recordings embarrassing to Dr. King, and that the FBI had offered to play those tapes both to a government official and to reporters. The evidence reveals a disturbing attitude of unconcern by responsible officials and a failure on their part to make appropriate corrective measures. As Nicholas Katzenbach explained to the Committee:

> Nobody in the Department of Justice connected with Civil Rights could possibly have been unaware of Mr. Hoover's feelings (against Dr. King). Nobody could have been unaware of the potential for disaster which those feelings embodied. But, given the realities of the situation, I do not

[293] Letter from FBI to the Senate Select Committee, 11/6/75.

believe one could have anticipated the extremes to which it was apparently carried.[294a]

The following incidents have played a part in our determination that high officials of the Executive Branch must share responsibility for the FBI's effort against Dr. King.

(1) As described in the previous chapter, a summary memorandum containing information gathered from the FBI microphone placed in Dr. King's room in the Willard hotel was shown to Presidential Assistant Walter Jenkins by Cartha DeLoach on January 14, 1964. According to DeLoach's contemporaneous account of that meeting:

> Jenkins was of the opinion that the FBI could perform a good service to the country if this matter could somehow be confidentially given to members of the press. I told him the Director had this in mind, however, also believed we should obtain additional information prior to discussing it with certain friends.[295]

DeLoach testified that he could not recall the meeting with Jenkins, but that the memorandum should accurately reflect his conversation.[296]

Jenkins told the Committee staff in an unsworn interview that he did not recall the meeting described in DeLoach's memorandum, but that he had no reason to doubt that he had read the summary memorandum which DeLoach claims Jenkins saw. Jenkins expressly denied, however, that he had suggested that the information in the summary memorandum should be "leaked" to the press, or that either he or President Johnson had ever suggested that information about Dr. King should be "leaked" to anyone. He added, however, that he might have used words to the effect that "this is something people should know about"—referring to people in the Government—which could have been misinterpreted by DeLoach. He did not recall DeLoach telling him that the Director ultimately planned to leak this information to "certain friends." [297]

(2) A February 5, 1964 FBI memorandum reports a conversation between Edwin Guthman, the Justice Department's press secretary, and John Mohr of the Domestic Intelligence Division. According to Mohr's memorandum, Guthman told Mohr that he had heard that a reporter was preparing an article about Dr. King's alleged Communist affiliations.

> Guthman stated he was quite concerned inasmuch as it appeared there had been a leak from the FBI in connection with this matter. He told me the Attorney General had been most hopeful that there would be no "leaks" concerning King.
>
> From the tone of Guthman's entire remarks, it would appear he had two thoughts in mind without actually stating such thoughts. These thoughts were (1) that the Attorney General is most anxious that information concerning King not be released; and (2) that the Attorney General's connections with King, and his defensive statements concerning King to Congress in Civil Rights hearings, would certainly injure the Attorney General's political chances for the future.
>
> (H)e told me once again the Attorney General was not worried about what an exposure of King could do to him. He stated he and the Attorney General are only trying to protect FBI sources of information.[298]

The memorandum states that Guthman was told "there had been no leaks from the FBI concerning Dr. Martin Luther King," and that Guthman had responded that "he had no proof whatsoever that the FBI had furnished information to the newspapers concerning King."

Guthman testified that he recalled the Justice Department had "suspected that the information had been leaked by the FBI." When asked the basis for that suspicion, he said that "we felt that the question of King and the association with [Advisers A] was a matter which was rather tightly held since it was not something of general knowledge." [299] Guthman said that he could "not specifically" recall a reaction by Attorney General Kennedy to this "leak":

> except to be somewhat displeased over it. But that was in a sense all in a day's work and I don't recall anything specific.[300]

Guthman testified that he did not recall any further efforts to determine whether the FBI had in fact leaked the story.[301]

Guthman testified that DeLoach's memorandum "distorted" his remarks. Guthman said that his visit had been motivated, not by concerns about Kennedy's political future, but rather by a concern to protect FBI sources.[301a] A memorandum dated February 5, 1964, by Guthman, does not mention a meeting with Mohr, but does contain an account of a meeting between Guthman and Cartha DeLoach on the previous day.

> We both agreed that it was inevitable that King's connections with (Adviser A) would ultimately become public. I told DeLoach that our concern was over the FBI's source and that we had no other concern as to what the Attorney General had said or what our actions had been in connection with Martin Luther King.
>
> DeLoach said he thought we should be concerned in view of what the Attorney General had said on the subject. I pointed out that anything the Attorney General had said had been cleared with the FBI. I told Deke that our record in this matter could stand any scrutiny and that both Senator Russell

[294a] Hearings, Vol. 6, p. 209.
[295] Memorandum from Cartha DeLoach to J. Edgar Hoover, 1/14/64. This memorandum is also discussed pp. 121–122.
[296] Cartha DeLoach testimony, 11/25/75, p. 150.
[297] Staff summary, Walter Jenkins interview, 12/1/75, pp. 1–2. Jenkins said that he was physically unable to undergo the strain of a sworn and transcribed session.
[298] Memorandum from John Mohr to Cartha DeLoach, 2/5/64. Hoover wrote next to the last paragraph quoted above, "There has never been such solicitude in the past."
[299] Edwin Guthman testimony, 3/16/76, p. 13.
[300] Guthman, 3/16/76, p. 12.
[301] Guthman, 3/16/76, p. 20.
[301a] Guthman, 3/16/76, p. 22.

and Senator Monroney had been fully apprised of the facts last summer or last fall.[302]

A memorandum by Courtney Evans later that day reports that Evans discussed this matter with Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall, who said that he did not intend to tell the reporter anything about Dr. King, but that "if he developed anything at all with regard to [the reporter's] source of information, he would pass this along to us . . ." Evans' memorandum also notes, "According to information developed by our Atlanta office on February 4, 1964, [the reporter] had in his possession what appeared to be a blind memorandum containing information as to [Adviser A's alleged connections with the Communist Party]." [303]

A memorandum from Cartha DeLoach to Director Hoover dated February 18, 1964, apparently alludes to this incident and provides some insight into the political implications of the FBI's investigation of Dr. King. According to DeLoach's memorandum, Walter Jenkins and Bill Moyers of the White House told him that Burke Marshall had called and "indicated that the Attorney General had thought it highly advisable for the President to see the Department of Justice file on Martin Luther King . . . to make certain that the President knew all about King." [304]

The memorandum states that Marshall then:

> told Moyers that he wanted to give the White House a little warning. He stated that he personally knew that the FBI had leaked information concerning Martin Luther King to a newspaper reporter. Marshall told Moyers that he thought the White House should know this inasmuch as information concerning King would undoubtedly be coming out before the public in the near future.

Director Hoover wrote next to this entry, "Marshall is a liar." [305]

The memorandum reports that Jenkins told DeLoach that he thought the Attorney General was concerned with "being on record with the President with the fact that although he has, for political purposes, defended King, he wants the President to realize that he, the Attorney General, is well aware of King's Communistic background." [306]

The Director's handwritten note states: "Katzenbach did his dirt against us before Warren Commission and now Marshall is trying to poison the W(hite) H(ouse) about FBI." [307]

Neither Burke Marshall nor Bill Moyers recalled the events described in DeLoach's memorandum. Marshall testified, however, about an incident involving the FBI's leaking information to a reporter that may well have been the same incident. Marshall recalled that sometime in 1964, a reporter told him that the Atlanta office of the FBI had given him information unfavorable to Dr. King. Marshall said that he phoned the Bureau official with whom he normally conducted business and said, "I'm informed by a reporter that your people in Atlanta have given this information about Martin Luther King, and that I think it is outrageous." The official at first said, "I don't believe it," but promised to inquire further. He later called and said, "The Director wants you to know that you're a . . . damned liar." Marshall told the Committee, "It was very difficult with the Bureau because if you said that they were leaking derogatory information, they would say, 'no, we're not.' " [308]

(3) Bill Moyers, President Johnson's assistant, testified that sometime during the "hurley-burley disorganized period" shortly after President Kennedy's assassination and prior to President Johnson's state of the Union address, he heard laughter inside Walter Jenkins' office. Moyers inquired and was told by a secretary that an FBI agent had come to the office and offered to play for Jenkins a tape recording which would have been personally embarrassing to Dr. King. Jenkins refused to listen to the tape. A week later, the same FBI agent again came to the White House and offered to play the tape for Jenkins, and again Jenkins refused to listen to it.[309]

Jenkins told the Committee that he did not recall ever having been offered tapes by the FBI, and did not know of anyone on the White House staff who had been.[310]

In addition to this incident, Moyers testified that he had been generally aware that the FBI reports about Dr. King included information of a personal nature, unrelated to the purpose of the FBI's investigation. When asked if he had ever asked the FBI why it was disseminating this type of material to the White House, Moyers responded:

> I don't remember. I just assumed it was related to a fallout of the investigations concerning the communist allegations, which is what the President was concerned about.
>
> *Question.* Did you ever question the propriety of the FBI's disseminating that type of information?
>
> Answer. I never questioned it, no. I thought it was spurious and irrelevant . . . If they were looking for other alleged communist efforts to embarrass King and the President, which is what the President thought, Kennedy or Johnson, it would just seem natural that other irrelevant and spurious information would come along with that investigation.
>
> *Question.* And you found nothing improper about the FBI's sending that information along also?
>
> Answer. Unnecessary? Improper at that time, no.
>
> *Question.* Do you recall anyone in the White House ever questioning the propriety of the FBI's disseminating this type of material?
>
> Answer. I think . . . there were comments that tended to ridicule the FBI's doing this, but no.[311]

Moyers testified that he had not suspected that the FBI was covering Dr. King's activities with microphones, although he con-

[302] Memorandum, Edwin Guthman, 2/5/64.
[303] Memorandum from Courtney Evans to Alan Belmont, 2/5/64.
[304] Memorandum from Cartha DeLoach to J. Edgar Hoover, 2/18/64.
[305] DeLoach memorandum, 2/18/64.
[306] DeLoach memorandum, 2/18/64.
[307] DeLoach memorandum, 2/18/64.

[308] Burke Marshall testimony, 3/3/76, pp. 46–47.
[309] Bill Moyers testimony, 3/2/76, p. 19, staff summary of Bill Moyers Interview, 11/24/75.
[310] Jenkins (staff summary), 12/1/75, p. 4.
[311] Moyers, 3/2/76, p. 17.

ceded, "I subsequently realized I should have assumed that. . . . The nature of the general references that were being made I realized later could only have come from that kind of knowledge unless there was an informer in Martin Luther King's presence a good bit of the time." [312]

(4) According to Nicholas Katzenbach, on November 25, 1964, the Washington Bureau Chief of a national news publication told him that one of his reporters had been approached by the FBI and given an opportunity to listen to some "interesting" tapes involving Dr. King.[313] Katzenbach told the Committee:

> I was shocked by this revelation, and felt that the President should be advised immediately. On November 28, I flew, with Mr. Burke Marshall, the retiring head of the Civil Rights Division, to the LBJ Ranch.
>
> On that occasion he and I informed the President of our conversation with the news editor and expressed in very strong terms our view that this was shocking conduct and politically extremely dangerous to the Presidency. I told the President my view that it should be stopped immediately and that he should personally contact Mr. Hoover. I received the impression that President Johnson took the matter very seriously and that he would do as I recommended.
>
> On the following Monday, I was informed by at least one other reporter, and perhaps two, of similar offers made to them the prior week. I spoke to the Bureau official who had been identified as having made the offer and asked him about it. He flatly denied that any such offer had been made or that the FBI would engage in any such activity. Thereupon I asked at least one of the reporters—perhaps all of them—whether they would join me in confronting the Bureau on this issue. They declined to do so.
>
> I do not know whether President Johnson discussed this matter with Mr. Hoover, or what, if anything, was said. However, I was quite confident that that particular activity ceased at that time, and I attributed it to Mr. Johnson's intervention. From that time until I left the Justice Department I never heard from any person of subsequent similar activity by the Bureau, and I assumed it had ceased. I should add only this: I believed that the tapes in question were not tapes resulting from Bureau surveillance but tapes acquired from State law enforcement authorities, and that such a representation was made to the reporter at the time.[314]

Katzenbach testified that Cartha DeLoach was the Bureau official whom the reporters had identified as having offered the tapes. Katzenbach said that he had contacted DeLoach on his own volition, and that he did not tell DeLoach that he had discussed the matter with the President. He said that when he asked DeLoach if the Bureau had been offering to play tape recordings concerning Dr. King to reporters, DeLoach "told me rather angrily they were not." [315]

Burke Marshall, when questioned by the Committee about these events, testified that the same two reporters had also informed him that Director Hoover was offering to play tape recordings of Dr. King. He testified that he had assumed the reporters "were telling the truth, that these tape recordings existed, and that they were being leaked by the FBI." [316] He testified that he had not suspected that the FBI had produced the tapes itself from microphone coverage, but that he had assumed the FBI had acquired the tape recordings from Southern law enforcement agencies.

> It did not occur to me that the FBI would go around placing microphones in Dr. King's hotel . . . The notion that they would plant the microphone, that they had a whole system of surveillance of that sort, involving illegal entry and trespass and things like that, did not occur to me. I would not have put it past the local police, but I considered at the time—except for Mr. Hoover himself—that the Bureau was a tightly controlled, well-run, efficient, law abiding law enforcement agency, that it didn't do things like that, and therefore, it didn't occur to me that they had done it.[317]

Marshall recalled that he and Katzenbach had flown to President Johnson's ranch in Texas and had told the President that the FBI was offering the tape recordings to reporters. Marshall said that the President was "shocked," and that the "conversation was in the context of it being very important and a very nasty piece of business that had to be stopped." Marshall did not know, however, what action the President subsequently took, if any, and could not remember whether the President had voiced an intention to take any specific action.[318]

DeLoach, when asked if he had ever discussed the contents of tape recordings or surveillances of Dr. King with members of the press, testified: "I don't recall any such conversations." [319] DeLoach did state, however, that he had known about the tape recordings of Dr. King. He testified that one such tape recording had been in his office on one occasion, and that "it was so garbled and so terrible, I mean from the standpoint of fidelity, that I told them to knock it off and take it back." [320]

The only record of this episode in the FBI files is a memorandum by DeLoach dated December 1, 1964, stating in part:

> Bill Moyers, while I was at the White House, today, advised that word had gotten to the President this afternoon that [the newsman] was telling all over town . . . that the FBI had told him that Martin Luther King was [excised]. [The newsman] according to Moyers, had stated to several people

[312] Moyers, 3/2/76, p. 17.
[313] The two newsmen turned down the Bureau's offer.
[314] Nicholas Katzenbach testimony, 12/3/75, Hearings, Vol. 6, p. 210.
[315] Nicholas Katzenbach testimony, 11/12/75, pp. 97–98.
[316] Marshall testimony, 3/3/76, p. 39.
[317] Marshall testimony, 3/3/76, p. 43.
[318] Marshall testimony, 3/3/76, p. 43.
[319] DeLoach testimony, 11/25/75, p. 156.
[320] DeLoach testimony, 11/25/76, p. 188.

that, "If the FBI will do this to Martin Luther King, they will undoubtedly do it to anyone for personal reasons."

Moyers stated the President wanted to get this word to us so we would know not to trust [the newsman]. Moyers also stated that the President felt that [the newsman] lacked integrity and was certainly no lover of the Johnson administration or the FBI. I told Moyers this was certainly obvious.[321]

DeLoach testified that he could not recall the events surrounding this memorandum. Bill Moyers, after reviewing DeLoach's memorandum, testified that he recalled nothing about the incident involving the newsman or about Katzenbach's and Marshall's discussion with the President. He did not recall ever having heard that the Bureau had offered to play tape recordings of Dr. King to reporters, or ever having discussed the matter with DeLoach. He testified, however, that DeLoach's memorandum:

> sounds very plausible. I'm sure the President called me or he told me to tell him whatever [DeLoach's document reflects].
>
> *Question.* Did the President tell you that he understood that [the newsman] was saying all over town that the Bureau had been offering tapes?
>
> Answer. I can't remember the details of that. You know, I can't tell you the number of times the President was sounding off at [the newsman].[322]

When asked if it would be fair to conclude that the President had complained to Moyers about the newsman's revealing that the Bureau had offered to play tapes rather than about the fact that the Bureau had such tapes and had offered to play them, Movers replied, "It would be fair to conclude that. I don't recall if that was exactly the way the President said it." [323]

VI. THE HOOVER-KING CONTROVERSY BECOMES PUBLIC AND A TRUCE IS CALLED: APRIL–DECEMBER 1964

Summary

Director Hoover's dislike for Dr. King, which had been known within the Bureau since early 1962,[324] became a matter of public record in November 1964 when Director Hoover described Dr. King at a meeting with women reporters as the "most notorious liar" in the country. Dr. King responded that the Director was obviously "faltering" under the responsibilities of his office. The FBI immediately intensified its secret campaign against Dr. King, offering to play the tapes from microphone surveillance of Dr. King to reporters and to leak stories concerning him to the press. The FBI also sent a tape recording made from the microphone surveillance to Dr. King, with a warning which Dr. King and his close associates interpreted as an invitation to suicide.

The public aspects of the dispute peaked in December 1964, shortly before Dr. King went to Europe to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. King publicly announced that it was time for the controversy to end, and arranged a meeting with Director Hoover to seal a truce. The FBI's public criticism stopped, but the Bureau's secret campaign to discredit Dr. King continued. Believing that Dr. King's downfall would severely harm the entire movement for racial equality, several prominent civil rights figures met with FBI officials to voice their concern and seek assurances from the FBI that the attacks on Dr. King would stop.

[321] Memorandum from Cartha DeLoach to John Mohr, 12/1/64.
[322] Bill Moyers testimony, 3/2/76, p. 8.
[323] Moyers testimony, 3/2/76, p. 9.
[324] As early as February 1962, the Director had informed the Domestic Intelligence Division: "King is no good anyway."

A. First Steps in the Public Controversy April–November 1964

Although the FBI had been covertly engaged in a massive campaign to discredit Dr. King for several months, the fact that the FBI was the source of allegations about communist influence in the civil rights movement did not become public until the release of Director Hoover's off-the-record testimony before the House Appropriations Committee in April 1964. The Director was quoted in the press as having testified that " 'Communist influence does exist in the Negro movement' and can influence 'large masses' of people." [325] Dr. King immediately issued a forceful reply:

> It is very unfortunate that Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, in his claims of alleged communist infiltration in the civil rights movement, has allowed himself to aid and abet the salacious claims of southern racists and the extreme right-wing elements.
>
> We challenge all who raise the "red" issue, whether they be newspaper columnists or the head of the FBI himself—to come forward and provide real evidence which contradicts this stand of the SCLC. We are confident that this cannot be done.
>
> We affirm that SCLC is unalterably opposed to the misguided philosophy of communist.
>
> It is difficult to accept the word of the FBI on communist infiltration in the civil rights movement, when they have been so completely ineffectual in resolving the continued mayhem and brutality inflicted upon the Negro in the deep south. It would be encouraging to us if Mr. Hoover and the FBI would be as diligent in apprehending those responsible for bombing churches and killing little children as they are in seeking out alleged communist infiltration in the civil rights movement.[326]

In early May 1964, Director Hoover made the following response to a question from United Presss International concerning whether any

[325] New York Times, 4/22/64, p. 30.
[326] FBI transcription of Dr. King's statement to press, Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 4/23/64. Another FBI memorandum which dealt with Dr. King's statement indicated the Bureau's opinion that someone "high in the Administration not known to us . . . apparently agreed with Dr. King's press release." Sullivan's report about Dr. King's statement pointed out that "King quoted the AG against the Director, to the effect that it is to be expected that communist will try to infiltrate civil rights movements, but they had not succeeded in making the expected impact." (Memorandum from William Sullivan to Alan Belmont, 4/23/64.)

Both Young and Ralph Abernathy, who also heard the tape and read the letter, interpreted it as inviting Dr. King to take his own life.[346]

William Sullivan testified that he could not recall such a letter.[347] The FBI provided the Committee with a copy of a letter which was found in Sullivan's office files following his discharge in 1971.[348] The letter stated in part:

> King, look into your heart. You know you are a complete fraud and a greater liability to all of us Negroes. White people in this country have enough frauds of their own but I am sure they don't have one at this time that is any where near your equal. You are no clergyman and you know it. I repeat that you are a colossal fraud and an evil, vicious one at that. . . .
>
> King, like all frauds your end is approaching. You could have been our greatest leader. . . . But you are done. Your "honorary" degrees, your Nobel Prize (what a grim farce) and other awards will not save you. King, I repeat you are done. . . .
>
> The American public, the church organizations that have been helping—Protestants, Catholics and Jews will know you for what you are—an evil beast. So will others who have backed you. You are done.
>
> King, there is only one thing left for you to do. You know what it is. You have just 34 days in which to do (this exact number has been selected for a specific reason, it has definite practical significance). You are done. There is but one way out for you. You better take it before your filthy fraudulent self is bared to the nation.

Andrew Young stated that the last paragraph of this letter was identical with the letter that had been sent to the SCLC headquarters, but that the other portions of the letter appeared to be an earlier draft of the letter that he had seen.[349] Sullivan testified that he did not recall ever having seen the document, although it was "possible" that he had something to do with it and simply cannot remember.[350] Sullivan also testified that he could not recall any conversations at the FBI concerning the possibility of Dr. King's committing suicide. After reading the last paragraph of the letter, he conceded that it could be interpreted as an invitation to suicide, although so far as Sullivan knew,

[346] Young, 2/19/76, p. 8; staff summary of Ralph Abernathy interview, 11/19/75, p. 3.

[347] Sullivan, 11/1/75, p. 112.

[348] The Bureau said it could not find a copy in any of its other files.

[349] The letter given to the Committee by the FBI was single spaced; Andrew Young testified that Dr. King had received "a double spaced letter and it was about a page and a half. It was typed in a very old typewriter, very bad typing." He was certain, however that the last paragraph of the two letters were nearly identical. The one sent to Dr. King "was simplified and has shorter, simpler sentences, but essentially said the same thing, especially the part about 'there's only one thing left for you to do. . . .' I remember that vividly." (Young, 2/19/76, p. 36)

[350] Sullivan, 11/1/75, p. 112. Sullivan suggested that the letter might have been "planted" in his files.

the FBI's goal was simply to convince Dr. King to resign from the SCLC, not to kill himself.[351]

When asked by the Committee what had ultimately happened to the letter received by Reverend King, Andrew Young testified:

> I'm not really sure about this now, but I think we discussed something about a letter with DeLoach—I'm not certain whether it was DeLoach or the local FBI agents—and they said they would be glad to look into it. They said, whenever we got any of these kind of threatening letters, to send them to them, and they would be glad to investigate. That letter may have been sent back to DeLoach.[352]

C. Attempts by the FBI to "Leak" to Reporters Tape Recordings Embarrassing to Dr. King

After Director Hoover denounced Dr. King as a "notorious liar" in mid-November, the FBI apparently made several attempts to "leak" tape recordings concerning Dr. King to newsmen. One offer involving the Bureau Chief of a national news publication has been discussed at length in the preceding chapter.[353] David Kraslow, another reporter, has told a Committee staff member, that one of his "better sources at the Bureau" offered him a transcript of a tape recording about Dr. King. Kraslow said that his source read him a portion of the transcript on the phone, and claimed that it came from a "bug" operated by a Southern police agency. Kraslow said that he declined the offer.[354]

It is not known how many other reporters were approached by the FBI during that period; Nicholas Katzenbach testified that at least one other reporter had informed him of a similar Bureau offer,[355] and other witnesses, such as James Farmer, have mentioned additional "leaks" from the Bureau.[356]

[351] One FBI witness testified that he interpreted the "34 days" to refer to Christmas, and that the FBI had apparently hoped Dr. King would resign for Christmas. (James Adams testimony, 11/19/75, Hearings, Vol. 6, pp. 66–68.) When asked about this interpretation, Andrew Young testified:

"We didn't think of that. We thought that he was talking about committing suicide, and we tied the date to the Noble Prize. . . . That is the way we discussed it; to commit suicide, or that he was going to be publicly humiliated just at the moment of his receipt of the Noble Prize." (Andrew Young, 2/19/76, p. 37)

Carl Rowan stated during a staff interview that he had been informed by a reliable source, whom he declined to identify, that the decision to mail the tape recording and letter had been made during a meeting at which Director Hoover was present. Rowan's source said that the Director was "livid" over Dr. King's receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize, and that methods of preventing Dr. King from receiving the Prize were discussed at the meeting. According to the source, there was a discussion at the meeting concerning allegations that Dr. King had tried to commit suicide when he was young (such allegations had appeared in the news media—e.g. Time 1/3/64, p. 14), and that he still had suicidal tendencies. The source told Rowan that the participants in the meeting had concluded that if the tape were mailed, Dr. King might be so distressed that he would commit suicide. (Staff summary of Carl Rowan interview, 8/29/75, p. 2.)

[352] Young, 2/19/76, p. 38. Young's conference with DeLoach is discussed p. 169. p. —.

[353] See p. 152 *et seq.*

[354] Staff summary, David Kraslow interview.

[355] Katzenbach, 11/12/75, p. 91. Katzenbach was unable to recall the identity of the reporter.

[356] James Farmer Staff Interview, 11/13/75, p. 5.

In October 1966, the Domestic Intelligence Division recommended that an article "indicting King for his failure to take a stand on the [black power] issue and at the same time exposing the degree of communist influence on him" be given to a newspaper contact "friendly" to the Bureau, "such as . . . [the] Editor of U.S. News and World Report."

> It is felt that the public should again be reminded of this communist influence on King, and the current controversy among civil rights leaders makes this timely to do so.[412]

Attached to the memorandum was a proposed article which noted that the efforts of several civil rights leaders to denounce "Black Power" had been "undermined by one man in the civil rights movement who holds in his hands the power to silence the rabble rousers and to give the movement renewed momentum." The article attributed Dr. King's equivocation to his advisers, who were alleged to have had affiliations with the Communist Party or organizations associated with the Party. Dr. King's decision to oppose the Vietnamese war was also attributed to these advisers.[413]

One project involving the mass media which the FBI felt had been particularly successful was its attempt to prevent Dr. King from obtaining contributions from James Hoffa of the Teamsters Union. In October 1966, the FBI discovered that Dr. King planned to meet with Hoffa, but that Dr. King had wanted to avoid publicity because, in the words of the Bureau:

> Disclosure of King's transparent attempt to blackmail Hoffa with the large Negro membership of Hoffa's union, to solve the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's financial problems, would cause an uproar among leaders of organizations having large Negro memberships; pointing out their own vulnerability to such a squeeze by any unscrupulous civil rights leader. This potential collusion between large labor unions and the civil rights movement could also react to the detriment of the Negro in that through large financial donations, an unscrupulous labor leader could subvert the legitimate aims and objectives of the civil rights movement to his own purposes.[414]

The Crime Records Division prepared an article for public release raising the question of "who really gets squeezed when these two pythons get together."[415] The Domestic Intelligence Division also recommended:

> a Bureau official be designated now to alert friendly news media of the meeting once the meeting date is learned so that

[412] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 10/27/66.
[413] Director Hoover's "O.K." appears at the bottom of the memorandum. There is also a note stating, "U.S. News and World Report will not use article of this nature." It is not known whether the article was actually distributed.
[414] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 10/28/66.
[415] Memorandum from Charles Brennan to Frederick Baumgardner, William Sullivan, attached to Baumgardner memorandum, 10/28/66.

> arrangements can be made for appropriate press coverage of the planned meeting to expose and disrupt it.[417]

Director Hoover's "O.K." appears below that recommendation.

On discovering that the meeting was about to occur, the Crime Records Division notified a reporter for the *New York Daily News* and a national columnist. "News photographers and wire services are also being alerted to give coverage. . . ."[418]

A Crime Records Division memorandum on the following day reported that "in view of publicity in the New York Daily News regarding this proposed meeting, King and his aides had decided that it would be unwise to meet with Hoffa." The Bureau then notified reporters that Dr. King was coming to Washington, D.C. The reporters "cornered" Dr. King as he came off the plane and quizzed him about the proposed meeting. The Crime Records Division reported these events to the Director with the assessment that "our counterintelligence aim to thwart King from receiving money from the Teamsters has been quite successful to date." Director Hoover initialed the memorandum reporting this news, "Excellent."[419]

In March 1967 Director Hoover approved a recommendation by the Domestic Intelligence Division to furnish "friendly" reporters questions to ask Dr. King. The Intelligence Division believed that Dr. King would be particularly "vulnerable" to questions concerning his opposition to the war in Vietnam, and recommended that a reporter be selected to interview Dr. King "ostensibly to question King about his new book," but with the objective of bringing out the foreign-policy aspects of Dr. King's philosophy.

> This could then be linked to show that King's current policies remarkably parallel communist efforts. This would cause extreme embarrassment to King.[420]

In October 1967 the Domestic Intelligence Division recommended that an editorial in a Negro magazine, which criticized Dr. King for his stance on the Vietnam war, be given to "friendly news sources." The purpose of the dissemination was to "publicize King as a traitor to his country and his race" and to "reduce his income" from a series of shows given by Harry Belafonte to earn funds for the SCLC. The recommendation was approved by the Director and is marked "Handled 10/28/67."[421]

4. Attempts to Discredit Dr. King With Major Political and Financial Leaders

In March 1965 the FBI learned that a "Martin Luther King Day" was being planned in a major city. The Domestic Intelligence Division recommended that the Special Agent in Charge "personally meet with the Governor and brief him concerning King" in order to "induce him to minimize the affair and especially the award for King."

[417] Memorandum from Frederick Baumgardner to William Sullivan, 11/3/66.
[418] Memorandum from Robert Wick to Cartha DeLoach, 11/8/66.
[419] Memorandum from Robert Wick to Cartha DeLoach, 11/9/66.
[420] Memorandum from Charles Brennan to William Sullivan, 3/8/67. The proposal was given Director Hoover's "O.K." and a handwritten note in the margin initialed by the Chief of the Crime Records Division states, "handled."
[421] Memorandum from George Moore to William Sullivan, 10/18/67.

> The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black-nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder.
>
> Intensified attention under this program should be afforded to the activities of such groups as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, *Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, Revolutionary Action Movement, the Deacons for Defense and Justice, Congress of Racial Equality, and the Nation of Islam. [Emphasis added.] [435]

The Domestic Intelligence Division expanded the Black Nationalist-Hate Groups COINTELPRO in February 1968. The instructions to the field offices listed as a "goal":

> Prevent the rise of a "messiah" who could unify and electrify the militant black nationalist movement. Malcolm X might have been such a "messiah;" he is the martyr of the movement today. Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, and Elijah Muhammed all aspire to this position. Elijah Muhammed is less of a threat because of his age. King could be a real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed "obedience" to "white, liberal doctrines" (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism. . . .[436]

The SCLC was retained as a "primary target" of the COINTELPRO, and Martin Luther King's name was added to the list of persons who were targets.

The supervisor of the Black Nationalist COINTELPRO, told the Committee that he could recall no counterintelligence activities directed against the SCLC, but that several were taken against Dr. King.[437]

C. The FBI's Efforts to Discredit Dr. King During His Last Months

Between 1965 and early 1967, the files indicate that Bureau concern about Dr. King had decreased. This concern was revived by Dr. King's April 4, 1967, speech at New York's Riverside Church, in which he opposed the Administration's position in Vietnam. The FBI interpreted this position as proof he "has been influenced by communist advisers," and noted that King's remarks were "a direct parallel of the communist position on Vietnam." [438] A week after the speech the FBI sent the White House and the Justice Department a revised edition of the printed King monograph.

In early December 1967 Dr. King announced plans to hold demonstrations in major American cities, including Washington, D.C., to spur Congress into enacting civil rights legislation. The FBI followed closely developments in Dr. King's "Washington Spring Project" forwarding to the White House information concerning Adviser A's

[435] Memorandum from Director, FBI to Special Agents in Charge, 8/25/67.
[436] Memorandum from Director, FBI to Special Agents in Charge, 3/4/68.
[437] Testimony, 10/17/75, p. 14.
[438] Memorandum from Charles Brennan to William Sullivan, 4/10/67.

fund-raising activities and Dr. King's plans to tape a lecture series for a foreign television system, allegedly to raise funds for the project.[440]

In February 1968 the FBI again revised the King monograph and distributed it to certain officials in the Executive Branch. The Domestic Intelligence Division memorandum recommending the new monograph stated that its dissemination "prior to King's 'Washington Spring Project' should serve again to remind top-level officials in Government of the wholly disreputable character of King." [441]

In early March, the Bureau broadened its Black Nationalist-Hate Groups COINTELPRO explicitly to include Dr. King.[442] Toward the end of the month, the FBI began to disseminate information to the press "designed to curtail success of Martin Luther King's fund raising campaign for the Washington Spring Project." The first of many plans included circulating a story

> that King does not need contributions from the 70,000 people he solicited. Since the churches have offered support, no more money is needed and any contributed would only be used by King for other purposes. This item would need nation-wide circulation in order to reach all the potential contributors and curtail their donations.[443]

On March 25, the Bureau approved a plan to mail an anonymous letter to a civil rights leader in Selma, Alabama, who was "miffed" with Dr. King, and a copy of that letter to a Selma newspaper, hoping that the newspaper might interview the leader about its contents. The Bureau described the purpose of the letter as calling

> to the attention of [the civil rights leader] that King is merely using the Negroes of the Selma area for his own personal aggrandizement; that he is not genuinely interested in their welfare, but only in their donations; that in all probability the individuals going to Washington for the Spring Project will be left stranded without suitable housing or food. The letter should also play up the possibility of violence.[444]

There is no indication in FBI files that the letter was mailed.

During the latter part of March, Dr. King went to Memphis, Tennessee, where a strike by Sanitation Workers had erupted into violent riots.

A March 28, 1968, Domestic Intelligence Division memorandum stated:

> A sanitation strike has been going on in Memphis for some time. Martin Luther King, Jr., today led a march composed of 5,000 to 6,000 people through the streets of Memphis. King was in an automobile preceding the marchers. As the march developed, acts of violence and vandalism broke out including the breaking of windows in stores and some looting.

[440] Memorandum from George Moore to William Sullivan, 12/18/67; memorandum from Director, FBI to LEGAT, 12/21/67.
[441] Memorandum from George Moore to William Sullivan, 2/29/68.
[442] See discussion, *supra*, p. 180.
[443] Memorandum from George Moore to William Sullivan, 3/26/68.
[444] Memorandum from SAC, Mobile to Director, FBI, 3/25/68; memorandum from Director, FBI to SAC, Mobile, 4/2/68.

This clearly demonstrates that acts of so-called nonviolence advocated by King cannot be controlled. The same thing could happen in his planned massive civil disobedience for Washington in April.

ACTION

Attached is a blind memorandum pointing out the above, which if you approve, should be made available by Crime Records Division to cooperative news media sources.

The memorandum carried Director Hoover's "O.K." and the notation, "handled on 3/28/68." [445]

On March 29, 1968, the Domestic Intelligence Division recommended that the following article be furnished to a cooperative news source:

> Martin Luther King, during the sanitation workers' strike in Memphis, Tennessee, has urged Negroes to boycott downtown white merchants to achieve Negro demands. On 3/29/68 King led a march for the sanitation workers. Like Judas leading lambs to slaughter King led the marchers to violence, and when the violence broke out, King disappeared.
>
> The fine Hotel Lorraine in Memphis is owned and patronized exclusively by Negroes but King didn't go there for his hasty exit. Instead King decided the plush Holiday Inn Motel, white owned, operated and almost exclusively patronized, was the place to "cool it." There will be no boycott of white merchants for King, only for his followers.[446]

On April 4, Dr. King returned to Memphis. This time he registered at the Lorraine Hotel. We have discovered no evidence that the FBI was responsible for Dr. King's move to the Lorraine Hotel.[447]

[445] Memorandum from George Moore to William Sullivan, 3/28/68. An article about violence in the sanitation strike, published in the Memphis Commercial Clarion on March 29, 1968, echoed the wording of the FBI memorandum, although there is no proof that the FBI was responsible for the article. The article stated:

"Yesterday's march, ostensibly a protest on behalf of the city's striking sanitation workers, was generally considered to be a 'dress rehearsal' by Dr. King for his planned march on Washington April 22." (Memphis Commercial Clarion, 3/29/68.)

[446] Memorandum from George Moore to William Sullivan, 3/29/68.

[447] Dr. King's associates and the FBI both deny that this last effort to discredit Dr. King influenced his decision to move to the Lorraine Hotel. Dr. Ralph Abernathy, who was with Dr. King during his last days, told the Committee that he had not been aware of any newspaper articles criticizing Dr. King for staying at the Holiday Inn during his visit the previous week. He was certain that the Lorraine had not been chosen because of any articles that might have appeared and said that Dr. King always stayed at the Lorraine when he visited Memphis, with the exception of the prior visit. In that instance, Dr. King had been brought to the Holiday Inn by police following a riot during the sanitation strike. (Staff summary of Ralph Abernathy interview, 11/19/75, p. 2.)

A handwritten note on the FBI memorandum criticizing Dr. King for staying at the Holiday Inn states: "handled, 4-3-68." The FBI questioned the agent who wrote "handled" on the memorandum and informed the Committee that he did not recall the memorandum, and did not know whether "handled" indicated that he had disseminated the article or simply cleared the memorandum through the Crime Records Division of the FBI.

According to the FBI, Dr. King checked into the Lorraine Hotel at 10:30 a.m. on April 3. The FBI has concluded that "the notation indicating that the proposed furnishing of information to news media was 'handled' on April 3, 1968. would, of course, preclude any such information from appearing in the press prior to King's checking into the Hotel Lorraine. . . ."

D. Attempts to Discredit Dr. King's Reputation After His Death

The FBI's attempts to discredit Dr. King did not end with his death. In March 1969 the Bureau was informed that Congress was considering declaring Dr. King's birthday a national holiday, and that members of the House Committee on Internal Security might be contacting the Bureau for a briefing about Dr. King. The Crime Records Division recommended briefing the Congressmen because they were "in a position to keep the bill from being reported out of Committee" if "they realize King was a scoundrel." DeLoach noted: "This is a delicate matter—but can be handled very cautiously." Director Hoover wrote, "I agree. It must be handled *very cautiously*." [447a]

In April 1969 FBI Headquarters received a recommendation for a counterintelligence program from the Atlanta Field Office. The nature of the proposed program has not been revealed to the Committee. A memorandum concerning the plan which the Bureau has given to the Committee, however, notes that the plan might be used "in the event the Bureau is inclined to entertain counterintelligence action against Coretta Scott King and/or the continuous projection of the public image of Martin Luther King. . . ." [447b] The Director informed the Atlanta office that "the Bureau does not desire counterintelligence action against Coretta King of the nature you suggest at this time." [448]

CONCLUSION

Although it is impossible to gauge the full extent to which the FBI's discrediting programs affected the civil rights movement, the fact that there was impact is unquestionable.

Rumors circulated by the FBI had a profound impact on the SCLC's ability to raise funds. According to Congressman Andrew Young, a personal friend and associate of Dr. King, the FBI's effort against Dr. King and the SCLC "chilled contributions. There were direct attempts at some of our larger contributors who told us that they had been told by agents that Martin had a Swiss bank account, or that Martin had confiscated some of the monies from the March on Washington for his personal use. None of that was true." [449] Harry Wachtel, one of Dr. King's legal counsels who handled many of the financial and fund raising activities of the SCLC, emphasized that the SCLC was always in need of funds. "Getting a grant or getting a contribution is a very fragile thing. A grant delayed has a very serious impact on an organization whose financial condition was pretty rough." [450] Wachtel testified that the SCLC continually had to overcome rumors of poor financial management and communist connections.

> The material . . . stayed in the political bloodstream all the way through to the time of Dr. King's death, and even after. In our efforts to build a King Center, it was around. It was like a contamination.[451]

[447a] Memorandum from Milton Jones to Thomas Bishop, 3/18/69. [Emphasis in original.]

[447b] Memorandum from SAC, Atlanta to Director, FBI, 4/3/69.

[448] Memorandum from Director, FBI to SAC, Atlanta, 4/14/69.

[449] Young, 2/19/76, pp. 25–26.

[450] Wachtel, 2/27/76, pp. 31–32.

[451] Wachtel, 2/27/76, p. 49.